43. Abolition of license fees on boats and of tolls for entering the Alleppey municipal limits.

MR. K. SANKARA PANIKKAR (*Ambalapuzha taluk, Group I*) said that the need for abolishing license fees on *vallams* had been pressed at several sessions of the Assembly. The major part of the Ambalapuzha taluk was submerged under water during the rainy season. These low portions were parts of Kuttanad and the inhabitants were agriculturists. *Vallams* were an absolute necessity for them for their daily life, even for moving from one place to another. Every family had at least a boat and the number of boats each had varied with the status of the family. Such being the case, it was hard that the Government had restricted the use of their mode of conveyance by imposing a license fee and toll. A boat costing Rs. 100 had to pay a fee of Rs. 2 per annum and the toll on it was 1 ch. per *diem*. Assuming that a boat could be used for 50 years, the boat-owners had to pay a total license fee of Rs. 100 and tolls to the extent of Rs. 650. This was over and above the maintenance and repairing charges which the boat-owner had to defray. This exaction in the shape of license fee and toll was oppressive and objectionable. The boats were used by agriculturists for agricultural purposes and they paid land-tax while others who used boats for industrial purposes paid income-tax on their income from industry. There was thus no justification in levying license fee on boats and it should be abolished. The policy of the Government was to help the agriculturists as much as possible and it was with this object that the Land Mortgage Bank was established and the system of agricultural loans was introduced. But the levy of license fee went against this policy. It affected the poor ryots who were suffering on account of economic depression. Timber when used for building purposes was not taxed. Such being the case, there was no reason why it should be taxed when it was made into boats. Similarly, agricultural implements were not taxed. The boats should also be regarded as falling under this category.

As regards toll, it was levied at the same rate on all boats alike irrespective of their size and the weight they could carry. Even small boats were bound to pay these dues. The Government might say that it was levied by a local body *viz.* the Municipality. But the Government had the power to interfere in Municipal administration.

For the foregoing reasons, the member prayed that both the license fee and the toll levied on *vallams* should be abolished.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Without taxation, Mr. Sankara Panikkar, a Municipality cannot exist. Alleppey is a big and important Municipality; and if this source of revenue, to which it is entitled, is taken away, its resources will be less, and it will have less means for improving the health and welfare of the people.

44. Means of communication in North Travancore in general with special reference to the Kottayam taluk.

MR. K. U. MATTYAVIRA (*Kottayam taluk, Group I*) said that when compared to British India communications in Travancore

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were much better. Natural facilities for water communication were abundant; and the Government were spending a considerable amount every year for public works. The development of agriculture, trade and industries in any place depended on its means of communication. Viewed from this standpoint, North Travancore suffered for want of adequate facilities of communication. The following were the chief needs of the Kottayam taluk in this respect —

(1) The railway line should be extended from Kottarakara to Alwaye. The Government have already spent some amount on its preliminary work. The work on this line should be commenced immediately in order to develop the trade and commerce in North Travancore and to remove unemployment.

(2) A cart road should be opened from Kottayam to Kumarakam. The need for this had been represented at several sessions of the Assembly. Kumarakam was in a low level and in times of flood the inhabitants were put to much hardship and inconvenince for want of a road. A local inspection would convince anybody of the need for this. The existing 6 feet road should therefore be widened and made into a cart road.

(3) A road should be opened between Kumarakam to Vechur. The length of this road would only be 4 miles. The opening of this road would serve as a short cut between Kottayam and Vaikom to the extent of 12 miles.

(4) Two bridges across the Kumarakam market canal, one at the eastern end and another at the western end, should be constructed.

(5) A cart road should be constructed starting from near the Tiruvarpu Girls' School meeting the Parippu-Kottayam road and passing through Parippu, Olassa, Chengalam and Tiruvarpu.

(6) A bridge should be constructed across the Pannakam *todu* where it crosses the Ayarkunnam-Kidangur road.

(7) The ryots' road taking off from the Kidangur road and leading to the Punnatra church landing should be taken over for departmental maintenance.

(8) The road from Kottayam to Illikkal should be made fit for cart traffic and the bridges thereon repaired.

(9) The portion of the river between Illikkal and Chengalam should be widened. Besides being useful as a means of communication it will also benefit the adjoining paddy lands by depositing silt.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Ittyavira, the idea of extending the railway line from Kottarakara to Alwaye was given up some years ago. The line now surveyed is from Quilon to Ernakulam so as to reach the Cochin Harbour.

For the Kottayam-Kumarakam road, an estimate for Rs. 36,700 has been prepared for two sections. It is a very large sum, and the matter has to be placed before the Road Board. Only after that road has been constructed, can the question of opening a road between Kumarakam and Vechur be thought of.

In regard to the other roads and bridges you have mentioned, in some cases estimates have been prepared, in others investigation is

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necessary. But everything depends on the urgency of the matter and the availability of funds. There is a road, at present known as the Punnatra Church approach road. That is being maintained by the Public Works Department from 1104, for the last three years, at a cost of Rs. 50 per annum.

The Chief Engineer proposes to enquire into the question of improving the Kottayam-Illikkal road and the repair of the bridges on it; and he will submit reports and estimates as soon as possible.

As regards your last point, the river is so winding that any attempt to improve it or to widen it will be very costly. It will therefore have to wait for better times.

45. Irrigational facilities in the Kunnatnad taluk

MR. P. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Kunnatnad taluk, Group I*) said that Kunnatnad was purely an agricultural taluk. But it lacked natural facilities for agriculture. Most of the lands were irrigated by bailing water from deep wells. The taluk yielded an annual income of Rs. 8 lakhs but the Government have not done anything substantial in return either by way of developing agriculture or otherwise. The Periyar water could easily be made use of for irrigating the lands now irrigated by well water by erecting a dam at Adirapalli where there was a waterfall and constructing the necessary distributary channels. It was regrettable to note that lands in British India were benefited by the Periyar water, while the lands in Travancore which were entitled to the use of that water were not so benefited. In this connection, the member said that the inhabitants on the banks of Mullaperiyar were put to much hardship and loss on account of the indiscriminate letting out of the surplus water by the Dam Supervisor without notice with the result that even loss of lives occurred. This should be prohibited by restricting the level of water above the dam and regulating the letting out of the surplus water. The Adirapalli scheme has been under the consideration of the Government for a very long time but has not yet materialised. As this scheme would benefit a large number of agriculturists who were on the verge of ruin, the Government should take it up immediately without allowing it to lie over on grounds of finance.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Narayana Pillai, the scheme suggested by the Economic Development Board to make use of the Periyar water for irrigation purposes has been referred to the Chief Engineer. He will be asked to expedite his report and it will be considered. He will also be asked to report on the grievances against the Superintendent of the Periyar Dam.

46. Roads and communications

MR. H. O. L. MARIKAR (*Devicolam taluk*) first spoke about the need for making improvements to the Northern Outlet road. This was one of the most important roads in the State. The nearest railway station on the northern side of the Devicolam taluk was 18 miles

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